

MINUTES

Resource Advisory Council Meeting

Missoula, Montana

December 10, 1998

Advisory Council Members Absent: Jay Lynn Hansen, Greg Schildwachter, Spence Hegstad, Steve Antonoli.

BLM Personnel Present: Scott Powers, Nancy Andersen, Merle Good, Renee Johnson, Facilitator; Angie Morse, Recorder; Jeanne Sullivan, RAC Coordinator.

Scott announced that Spence was defeated in the Beaverhead County Commissioner election and plans to resign after this meeting.

The vacant chairperson position was discussed. Hank volunteered to be the chairman at the next two meetings. The RAC agreed, and will address a permanent chair when Spence's position is filled.

Rich Clough announced his resignation effective following this meeting. His term will expire in September, 1999.

Nancy announced that Greg Schildwachter has missed two meetings. Nancy will call him and find out if he is interested in being on the RAC. An official letter will be sent out regarding his absences.

Field Office Updates:

Missoula Field Office (MFO), Nancy Anderson, Field Manager:

Tony Lue from Moab was selected as the new Ranger for the Missoula Field Office.

The Lower Blackfoot Exchange is about 2/3 of the way done. The MFO has started a Landscape Assessment on the lands that were acquired. The office has had several requests for permits.

A request for a land exchange has been received for the Garnet Ghost town area. A third party appraiser has been hired and the cost is being split with GMC.

The MFO is still trying to complete bull trout consultation for ongoing projects. The decision from FWS should be received before the cows are turned out on most allotments. Nancy will travel to Billings next week to meet with FS officials. The prairie dog, lynx and wolverine issues will make everything complex.

The MFO is working on an Environmental Assessment for the eighteen leases to meet S&G implementation. Nine allotments in the Rock Creek area are not currently meeting S&Gs. MFO is working with the permittees, and is looking at 4/1/99 as a decision date for those allotments.

Butte Field Office (BFO, Merle Good, Field Manager:

Montana Power is donating a recreation site below Holter Dam. Lewis and Clark County will not accept the cadastral survey completed on the parcel because it is on private land

A longtime trespasser on Indian Creek was finally cited and taken to court for the 14 day camping limit. He was sentenced last week.

Pegasus Gold bankruptcy and mining reclamation bonding requirements were discussed. Cedron requested an update on the situation at the next meeting.

The BFO is hosting a Wild Horse and Burro adoption on May 1st. Thirty head of horses are coming from Polson. Applications must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the adoption. The new competitive bidding process will be used, with the minimum oral bid set at \$150.

The Whitetail/Pipestone draft EIS should be out 2/1/99.

The Devils Elbow exchange has been completed. Received \$600,000 of LWCF money.

BFO is now looking at an acquisition of the Ward Ranch at Hauser Reservoir.

Twenty islands down the Missouri River were acquired.

The City of Helena has finally agreed to acquire vacant BLM lands around Helena under a Recreation and Public Purposes Act. These kinds of tracts are very difficult for BLM to manage.

We have received \$200,000 to construct a new administrative site at Holter Lake.

52 eagles were counted over Thanksgiving weekend at Canyon Ferry, with over 5,000 people visiting during the "eagle season". We have a new brochure for Canyon Ferry as well.

New Rangeland Management Specialist to start mid January.

Dillon Field Office, Scott Powers, Field Manager:

Update on Muddy Creek--We requested and vacated the original decision. We are now reassessing the allotment to come up with a new decision under the new regulations. We will send out a letter to the RAC regarding this. We have plenty of data and are hoping to keep it fairly low key. Peggy Redick is taking the lead on the project. The RAC requested to be added to the mailing list for Muddy Creek, with the exception of Rich, Cedron, and Hank. The comment was made to keep FWP involved, keep S&Gs in mind, consider alternatives and give the permittees a chance to make it work. Scott was then asked if he thought all parties were willing to make things work? Scott responded there is only one appellant that appears to still be unwilling though BLM feels they have given him many opportunities to come to agreement. Scott was asked who the person was and responded that it was Glenn Hockett. Scott was then asked if the bull trout decision will affect Muddy Creek. Scott responded that there are no bull trout, but there are pure WCT. We have been doing projects in the area to benefit the fish and wetlands, for example, we have built a fish barrier.

Beaverhead Acquisition. Dillon has received LWCF and NACA funds for this acquisition. We have too much money. We received more than what the tracts were appraised at. Ducks Unlimited will be a

partner with us in managing the tract; we are going to put several ponds; DU will come in and do the engineering work this summer and we will put them in next year. Scott was asked what kind of water rights the BLM would acquire. He responded they were irrigation rights. Tom Rice irrigated it this year and the comeback is phenomenal. He is on the irrigation board. We might do some type of exchange with him to do the irrigating in exchange for his grazing. We are going to put an advisory group together on management of the tract and will start approaching folks this winter.

Dillon is starting an Oil and Gas (O&G) amendment. There is some limited exploration going on, but production is not occurring given the low price of oil. Some groups out of Denver are pushing us to do this. The FS did a similar amendment in 94. Programmatic factor? We are doing an EIS. Most of the interest is in the Lima and Tendoy area. If we are going to amend our land use plan we might as well do it for the whole area. Next time we have a meeting we can have a GIS demonstration. This will be on lands we have surface and subsurface rights on. Butte and Missoula do not address an O&G in the RMP.

We are looking at doing a travel plan for the Centennial Valley. The question was asked whether DFO was working with the Targhee. Scott responded that we would be coordinating with them.

DFO's new Outdoor Recreation Planner that will start at the end of January.

Merle then stated that the Public Affairs Officer will be reporting in February and will represent the Western Zone as well as be the Montana BLM liaison for the Legislature. Her name is Jean Nelson Dean.

With the updates over, the RAC moved on to the first agenda item.

Renee handed out recommendations that came out of the small group OHV breakout sessions from the joint meeting held in September. The RAC had asked to review these recommendations again. Cedron began the discussion by stating he feels the RAC is being railroaded.

Before the RAC began any discussions, he said he would like to hear about the statewide EIS process and be reassured whether or not the RAC should continue with this process. Cedron felt the BLM and FS are being secretive about the Statewide EIS process. Doug Rand also commented that he has not heard anything about the process either.

Scott and Merle then updated the group on the Statewide OHV EIS. The OHV team is looking at wheeled vehicles only. Snowmobile use will not be addressed. The proposal will be for vehicles to stay on existing roads, to allow for agencies to get a handle on damage that is occurring in "open" areas. All travel will be restricted to existing roads and trails. Later, individual areas will be looked at on an individual basis. Off road travel in certain instances can be authorized in leases or permits, or for game retrieval. A draft of the proposal should be out in January for public comment. Public meetings will then be held in February for scoping and then again in July once a draft EIS is out. A handout was passed around that discussed the pertinent points of the EIS process and the OHV team organization.

Doug Abelin commented that the key factor will be how the agencies will enforce what is being proposed. He also brought up the fact that there are different regulations that BLM and FS and State operate under. Hank commented that he thought the proposal sounded good--that from his point of view, what BLM and the FS is doing is exactly what the RAC asked for in their October 15th letter. Cedron commented that there is still a problem with what will be considered an existing trail--does three passes of a vehicle making a track then make something a trail? How will we be consistent? A comment was made that that concern can be taken care of by having an inventory. In regard to game retrieval, it was stated that the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) does not allow any off-route travel. If you shoot an

animal you know what you are doing and you should have to walk over and retrieve it.

Doug Abelin then brought up the issue on the need to change Montana law so that plural use can occur on low level roads. This ties back to differences in license requirements on State, FS, and BLM lands and differences in regulations. Doug explained that he is working with a group to introduce a bill to the legislature to address these issues. Doug was asked if there is opposition to this and if there is another side of the story. Doug reiterated that one of the main issues is the difference in regulations, who can ride, who is licensed to ride, and whether the vehicle is licensed to ride. He explained some of the OHV groups safety initiatives that allow a rider to get an "endorsement". Cedron commented that it would be nice to clean this up and thinks that in terms of enforcement, there is a legitimate concern. After much discussion, the RAC was asked if they wanted to make some sort of recommendation on this issue. Does the RAC want to take this on? For some it was unclear what they were being asked to do. Doug just asked the RAC to remain aware of this issue and to keep up-to-date. The RAC agreed to a resolution to support the idea of the State of Montana and other agencies to be consistent on who can ride.

Resolution:

The Interagency OHV Team should look at making licensure of vehicles/users consistent across boundaries.

The question was then asked if a resolution such as this one really meant anything to the BLM. Will the OHV Team be dealing with that type of thing? Scott responded that it would be most useful for the RAC to offer suggestions that could apply at the local level when we start doing our local planning. However, the BLM would like to know whether you support the current proposal at the Statewide level.

A question was asked about RS2477 filings by the Counties and how they fit into this process--are they open access? The BLM responded that we are not trying to define the legal status of roads as part of this process.

Rich mentioned the emergency closure on the Whitetail-Pipestone area and asked if it would be possible to do an emergency closure statewide. Merle indicated the difference was the scope of the area and that emergency closures do not require public involvement. BLM leaders are worried about doing that. We want the public involvement. Rich said he totally agreed with the public involvement; are you going to go to each area and declare an emergency? The answer was no.

Bob read the regulations about emergency closures. Merle said that was discussed with the State Director and he said they were not going to do it that way.

Rich mentioned that FWP had gone through an EA process on all groomed trails in the past couple years and will soon be addressing snowmobile use. This is far more important right now. Hank looked through the October 15th letter sent to BLM by the RAC and indicated that snowmobile use was not addressed in that letter.

The comment was made that the FS has not been meeting their own Forest plans on snowmobile use. If it will take 10-15 years to complete area-specific plans that will address snowmobile use, that is a problem. A lot of people don't want to wait 10-15 years to make these decisions.

Renee then asked the RAC if they had any suggestions on how the 10-15 year "delay" might be addressed. Bob responded that his thumb is "down" on any recommendation to proceed with the Statewide EIS until he hears a strong recommendation to address the problem. Bruce suggested putting

time frames on deferring--create a schedule for completion of individual travel plans. Cedron then commented that he thought if the agencies were to go through this process and stay on schedule and implement what they are proposing, it would be a large benefit to the landscape.

Hank indicated that he thought the RAC should and did support the BLM statewide effort. However, he said he has heard nervousness is being expressed given some of the promises out there Mountain bikers, horsebackers, snowmobiles will not be dealt with. There are also concerns being expressed about the FS. Some individuals still had a problem with putting the snowmobile issue aside. The group finally agreed they want to support the intent of the interim restrictions, but also feel it necessary to inform the BLM that we think they need to do the snowmobile thing too.

A motion was made that:

- 1) WM RAC supports statewide EIS process to address wheeled motorized vehicle use.
- 2) Snowmobile use an equal concern and must be dealt with ASAP.

Bob was still worried about the timeframes associated with the snowmobile issue. He wants to assign a specific limit or a timeframe to #2. The question was asked what is ASAP? Bruce agreed that the term ASAP bothered him too.

The comment was made that the hope was to get the agencies to agree to start on snowmobile use. BLM managers responded that it seemed to them the snowmobile parameter has been set--that BLM does NOT intend to address it in the Statewide EIS, and that it will be looked at during local planning efforts.

Bob Zimmerman then asked that the term "wheeled" be taken out of Motion #1 statement. The group discussed, however, that the Statewide process is only addressing "wheeled" travel. Cedron commented that it is not the EIS process he wants to support, it is the intent of limiting travel to existing roads and trails. The group then moved back to the Motion for wordsmithing. As a result of this discussion, the issue of what is considered an "existing road and trail" was broached again. What "baseline" will be used for existing? Bob then brought up his concern of all of the non-compliance that is not being addressed. How will this be addressed? Bob felt strongly that a message must be sent to the agencies that they need to get their act together to avoid new trails being created that are then considered existing or in the inventory when the agencies finally get to individual travel planning.

This discussion led to the creation of a third part to the motion. Parts 1 and 2 of the motion were also amended. The motion was amended to read:

- 1) The Western Montana RAC supports the Interagency effort to address wheeled motorized vehicle use.
- 2) Snowmobile use is of equal concern and a management plan for such use should be expeditiously initiated.
- 3) The Western Montana Rac has concern with the terminology of "existing roads and trails" and does not want to see the term used to grandfather unauthorized and inappropriate use.

Doug Abelin wanted to ensure it was understood that the limitation to existing is only temporary; he would want assurance that when local planning is done that groups would get a reasonable shot at something different. The comment was made that land management isn't a popularity contest, that what

needs to be considered is the resource. The comment was made that it was not worth supporting this effort if what it means is having new trails being created in the next 10 yrs if it is not limited to what is on the map. The question of what is existing continued to be discussed as well as what should be the "baseline". No consensus was reached, though there were lots of thoughts about what the baseline should be. These included:

Mapped roads and trails

Used roads and trails

Inventoried roads and trails

Established roads and trails

Not acceptable because there are too many that are unauthorized.

Doug Rand expressed the concern that hundreds of thousands of miles of trails have been created without authorization. These are now causing management problems. To take action, resource damage must be shown. Management is too timid. This is a really small group of users that has a large impact on everyone else.

Hank asked the group to return to the motion. Is the resolution as written acceptable? Doug said he couldn't agree with the resolution as written now because of #3. Cedron pointed out by not endorsing this effort we are making the unauthorized and inappropriate use "legal". Bob felt it important to send the message to the FS that they haven't been doing their job. ORV groups will go make a trail and then it is existing and would be legal or grandfathered. Bob does not want to grandfather all the existing conditions on the ground.

Dan suggested that #3 be separated from #1 and #2 and addressed as a separate recommendation.

At this point, Renee noted to the record that no members of the public were present at 3 p.m. to address the RAC.

Consensus was reached on Motion #1 and #2, with the emphasis that the RAC supports the EFFORT not necessarily the proposal in regard to "existing roads and trails".

Scott then suggested that the RAC brainstorm some recommendations to the interdisciplinary team. The following list was developed:

The Interagency Team should consider the following items when developing the OHV proposal and the EIS:

What will the baseline for "existing" be?

Definitions

Existing is where passage of vehicles, animals or people has worn a continuous path on mineral soil

Consider how to tie format to Standards and Guides

Define what a road is

Consider the baseline as existing mapped roads and trails

Consider wildlife species and endangered species

Make sure none of current project specific travel planning designations will change w/EIS

Include review of the previous recommendations

Exceptions statewide and regional

Consider impact of development of this plan on future travel management planning

Specifically identify specific vehicle types

Product should follow the Standard and Guide format for RAC to use

Encourage environmental partnerships/projects

Encourage use of gas tax monies for rehab

Differentiate use between trails and roads.

This brainstorm list will be forwarded to the Interagency Team.

The comment was then made to remember how important "baseline" was in the Rangeland S&Gs, and that the "existing base" is just as important now for this exercise. It was also suggested that it might help if the RAC went back to the S&G framework.

Hank proposed and will draft a letter to Spence as a thank you. He indicated he was open to suggestions/language.

The next meeting was set for March 4th in Butte to start at 9 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS

Review and discuss Interagency team progress.

Review brainstorm list from this meeting.

Time to discuss snowmobiles.

Presentation on Mining Reclamation Bonding

WESTERN MONTANA RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

September 17, 1998

Bozeman, Montana - Holiday Inn

The following members were in attendance: Tad Dale, JayLynn Hansen, Martha Montgomery (new), Doug Abelin (new), Steve Antonioli, Cedron Jones, Doug Rand, Bob Zimmerman, Rich Clough, Hank Goetz and Spence Hegstad. Absent members were: Greg Schildwachter (new), Bruce Farling, Dan Lucas, and Mel Montgomery. BLM employees in attendance were: Scott Powers, Dillon Field Office Manager; Delon Potter, Missoula Field Office Assistant Manager; Merle Good, Butte Field Office Manager, Renee Johnson, facilitator; Jeanne Sullivan, RAC Coordinator and taking minutes was Angie Morse. Visitors to the meeting were: Larry Hamilton, Beth Horn, Linda Ellison, Donald Mazzola and Bill Orsello.

The new members, Martha Montgomery and Doug Abelin, were welcomed.

Spence inquired what the RAC would like to do about the land exchange memo received from Larry Hamilton. The deadline is 9/25/98. The RAC agreed Spence would respond stating this is of great interest to the RAC but the time frame doesn't allow for them to be involved. He will ask the BLM to keep the RAC updated on what this team is doing and suggest keeping it at the local level as much as possible when making the decisions.

Jeanne explained the travel voucher process and handed out copies of the Western Montana RAC website. She asked what type of information the members wanted on the website.

It was suggested that the public should have background info on what the RAC is currently working on. In order to do this, the meeting minutes from February to present will be posted on the website. Standards and Guidelines will also be posted.

Beth Horn from the USFS in Missoula introduced the idea of using the Montana Consensus Council's service for the Whitetail/Pipestone project. The RAC discussed their personal experiences with the Council and agreed their services are valuable however, they felt that this project is too far along to start over. They were concerned about the time frame to get the Council involved. They declined the Council's offer but encouraged BLM and the FS to use them on projects in the future.

The RAC voted on a new name. It was a unanimous vote to call themselves the Western Montana RAC.

Renee explained for the new members the thumbs voting process and the ground rules for each meeting.

The OHV Breakout Group Recommendations were handed out. The RAC was asked to review the recommendations from the joint meeting and see if they could come to a consensus to adopt them.

It was stated that the breakout groups dealt with peripheral issues rather than strategy. Standardization across agency jurisdictions needs to be a priority. Standardization should be the foundation block.

Agencies need total cooperation. They need to use the same format, posting, signing, etc. The RAC decided to make recommendations on standardization to get the agencies moving in the right direction.

Scott stated that an Interagency OHV Team was formed in July to look at OHV issues and statewide consistencies. The RAC should recommendations to this team on standardization between agencies.

Mapping was identified as a major concern. Travel maps are not defined. What is on the map is not what is truly on the ground. Color codes need to be consistent.

Use needs to be limited to existing roads and trails to protect resources. Areas should be dealt with on a "managed use" basis rather than totally open or totally closed. It was proposed that agencies should continue with existing closed areas and managed use would be implemented over the remaining areas. Activities will be limited to existing roads and trails until site specific travel management plans are completed. The BLM has the ability to open/close/restrict as needed. Classifications for travel should be as follows:

closed - no vehicular traffic

managed - allowed on existing roads and trails

possibility of designated intensive off road play areas (small and acceptable area)

A question was raised as "How do we define a road and a trail?" "Where do they begin and end?" The Miles City(MC) RAC draft guidelines on travel management were handed out. It was suggested that the RAC consider adopting the MC definitions. Some of the RAC members did not agree with the definitions. It was decided that the interagency team should tackle these definitions prior to the next RAC meeting.

Another concern mentioned was the difference between ground travel and snow travel. Snowmobiles do not cause resource damage except for noise and game harassment. They don't have the vegetation and erosion impacts. A statement will need to be made concerning "over snow travel". Other methods of travel the RAC will need to address are horses, foot travel, and bikes.

After the above discussion, the following recommendation was made:

All Public lands are under managed use.

Managed use means public travel is limited to:

- 1) Routes designated for specific types of travel and periods of use where a Travel Plan has been done.**
- 2) Existing Roads and Trails for wheeled vehicles and snowmobile areas where a Travel Plan is not done.**
- 3) Areas specifically designated for certain types of travel and/or periods of travel.**

All travel management is periodically reviewed.

The Western Montana RAC requested that the Montana State office distribute these recommendations to

the other Montana RACs. The Western Montana RAC would like copies of the other RAC's recommendations.

Public comment :

Linda Ellison spoke on behalf of the Blue Ribbon Coalition and the Noxious Weed Advisory Council.

Donald Mazzola spoke on behalf of the Montana Wilderness Association.

Bill Orcello spoke on behalf of the Montana Wildlife Federation.

The group was advised that the Miles City RAC adjourned and did not take any action on their draft guidelines. Each member will review the document, and submit comments by 9/25. Marilyn Krause will incorporate their comments into a final draft. The Western Montana RAC may request a copy of the final draft.

Managers Update:

Scott Powers provided an update on the Comb Wash court decision, land exchanges, and current personnel issues in Dillon.

Merle Good summarized their involvement in four travel plans similar to Whitetail/Pipestone; upcoming and ongoing timber sales; Abandoned Mine reclamation projects; Land exchanges; and stated the Public affairs person will be selected soon. He handed out copies of the publication *Forest Ecosystem Leadership*.

Delon Potter discussed the bull trout listing. He said they were sitting pretty good because of the UCRB-Pacfish/INFISH. They are taking a watershed approach to implementing S&Gs; the Blackfoot exchange is closer to completion; they have started a new acquisition near Garnet Ghost town. Also discussed personnel issues.

Rich Clough proposed that the BLM consider a suggestion that was discussed in the Land Exchange breakout group. The question "How do you accomplish the major workload of cultural inventories needed for the exchange process?" was asked. He suggested the BLM partner with Universities to accomplish this type of work. These students are paying tuition to come out here every summer.... why not have them do some of the work that needs done? Renee stated she would forward his suggestion to the Montana State Office.

*****The BLM Western Montana RAC recommends that the following items be consistent/and standard across Agency policy and boundaries, to include but not limited to:**

Maps (Scale/Terminology/colors)

Definitions

Signs/Universal Language

Adopt Western RAC "Managed Use" Policy

Interagency Travel Planning Based on Logical Geographic Units

Regulations and Policies

Guidelines

Weed Control and Management

Reasons to Leave Designated Routes

Planning Schedules (especially. Public Meetings)

Sharing of Information (especially Public Meetings/Project Lists)

Uniform Enforcement Guidelines

Positive Reinforcement- Handout/Card

Involve Private Landowner

NEPA Process

Education (Internal and External)

Recommend that the agencies in the interim adopt the Montana Cooperative Road Management signing program.

Recommend FLPMA be amended to be consistent with FS and State Penalties and Process.

****Spence will put together recommendation and send it out.**

Next Meeting:

December 10 at 9 a.m.

Missoula Field office

Jeanne will include a map with the agenda

Agenda:

Miles City Travel Management Draft Guidelines discussion

Discuss recommendations from the 7 small group discussions

Update from interagency group

Muddy creek update (15 min)

Field Office Manager's update

Handouts:

#1- Miles City S&Gs on Travel Management

#2- Web pages

#3 - Breakout Group recommendations

#4- Forest Ecosystem Stewardship booklet

Decisions:

1) Spence will respond to the Land Exchange memo from Larry. He will express the RACs interest; but explain that the time frame does not allow them to become involved.

2) Website should include Standards and Guidelines; and minutes from February when the ORV work began.

3) The RAC does not want the Consensus Council to take over the ORV issue, but they encourage the BLM and FS to work with them on another project.

4) The name of Western Montana RAC was approved.

5) The following recommendations will be forwarded by Spence:

All Public lands are under managed use..

Managed use means public travel is limited to:

1) routes designated for specific types of travel and periods of use where TP has been done.

2) Existing Roads and Trails for wheeled vehicles and snowmobile areas where TP is not done.

3) Areas specifically designated for certain types of travel and/or periods of travel.

All travel management is periodically reviewed.

6) The Interagency OHV Team should tackle defining road/trail/route and forward their information to the RAC before the next meeting in December.

7) The recommendations from today's meetings (Miles City/Lewistown/Western MT RACs) should be compiled and forwarded to all RACs. This should be coordinated by the State office.

8) The BLM Western Montana RAC recommends that the following items be consistent and standard across agencies and boundaries that would include but not be limited to:

Maps (Scale/Terminology)

Definitions

Signs/Universal Language

Adopt Western Montana RAC "Managed Use" Policy

Interagency Travel Planning Based on Logical Geographic Units

Regulations and Policies

Guidelines

Weed Control and Management

Reasons to Leave Designated Routes

Planning Schedules (especially Public Meetings)

Sharing of Information (especially Public Meetings/Project Lists)

Uniform Enforcement Guidelines

Positive Reinforcement- Handout/Card

Involve Private Landowner

Nepa Process

Education (Internal and External)

9) Recommend that the agencies in the interim go with the Montana Cooperative Road Management signing program.

10) Recommend FLPMA be amended to be consistent with FS and State Penalties and Process.

Action Items:

1. Spence will respond to the Land Exchange memo.
2. Spence will put together recommendations from today's meeting and send to MSO for distribution to other Montana RACs..
3. Jeanne will include a map of Missoula with the agenda.
4. Scott will notify Jody Weil of the Interagency OHV Team, about the RAC's request for them to define road/trail/route.
5. MSO will send out recommendations that resulted from the individual meetings on 9/17.
6. Renee will forward the land exchange topic item to MSO.

Western Montana

Resource Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

July 10, 1998

Dillon, Montana

RAC Members Absent: Bruce Farling, Hank Goetz, Tad Dale, Blake Huntley, Rich Clough, Dale Tash (deceased).

BLM Personnel present: Nancy Anderson, Scott Powers, Steve Hartmann, Renee Johnson, Facilitator, Angie Morse, Minutes.

*** The meeting began without a quorum (3 present in Category 1, 4 in Category 2, 2 in Category 3). Any decision made at today's meeting will have to be confirmed by the others at next meeting.** Renee will record the things that need to be confirmed and go over them at the next meeting.

Opening Remarks

Scott announced David is resigning from his position and has recommended a person to replace him. David asked if whoever replaces him would have to go thru the nomination next year? Yes.

The list of nominees that was submitted was handed out. Mel will be switching categories to replace Dale. The new members will attend the September meeting.

Scott said the RAC will now be called the Western Montana RAC; Everyone voted thumbs up.

Jim's going away is August 14th, an evening BBQ is planned. The RAC will be notified in advance.

Scott asked what the RAC would like to do about a home page on the Internet. Some suggestions were to post minutes, agendas and an update of what they are currently working on. An alias e-mail address could be set up to accept public comments, which would be forwarded on the individual RAC members. A canned comment could be set up to respond....Thank you for your comments, a reply will be sent after the next RAC meeting.... The RAC will discuss how to respond. It was determined it would not be appropriate for the agency to respond.

Is there a newsletter or site for the Quarterly Project list (QPL)? Angie replied yes, all the Montana BLM web sites will have a "news" site with up-to date listings and also the Public Lands News is also online. The QPL will be listed but there have been some formatting differences throughout the state, so it may be awhile before those are available for all offices (some offices like Butte already have them listed on their site). Angie will send out the web addresses for the sites. The RAC agreed to start the homepage.

Piute Trail Tour

Spence and Steve Hartmann reported on a tour they took in Richfield Utah.

Several agencies and the local community joined together in developing the Piute trail for ATV use, which consists of approximately 266 miles worth of trails and spurs. Little communities along the trail were incorporated in the plan. Ordinances have been set that allow the ATVs to ride through town on the streets. A Sheriff's deputy has been assigned to patrolling just that area. The users are required to pass a course and are given handouts that cover ethics. All agencies have people that ride and monitor the area. Two crews are funded that do nothing but maintenance on the trails. Funding comes from the State gas tax, and sticker sales.

Steve stated the purpose of the tour was to get ideas that might apply to the Whitetail/Pipestone (Tailpipe) area. He stated it is a neat area and they have a lot of ideas. The trail runs through two national forests, and lands managed by two BLM field offices.

A Steering Committee for the trail was developed that involves local citizens, city, county, local businesses, BLM, FS, and the Utah Parks Division. They meet once a month to discuss issues, maintenance, etc. The agency people sit in the background at the meetings and let the citizens come up with solutions.

The off road issue is not much of a problem. Users do not condone off trail use. They have a separate area nearby that consists of 600 acres that is a "play area". It is a shale area without a lot of erosion. People are allowed to run everywhere. A monitoring program was set up to monitor soils, if they see a problem, they will start to control it. Another area about 45 miles away that is a sand dune that is used for competitive events.

A week long event sponsored by the Steering group attracts thousands of people each year. It has been very beneficial to the economy. Two motels and several restaurants have been built in the area to support the users.

Spence stated the downside to Montana trying to build something like this is that we have no state sales tax. We would be inviting people to use the land with no profit. It would impact the Counties by spreading weeds, and would require more road maintenance.

Steve stated that they do not have the trail density that Tailpipe has, and soil is not as erosionable. It seems as if they were foreseeing a problem and beat it. There is not a great deal of off road use they were trying to deal with. We are trying to put out the fire, they got ahead of it.

Steve was asked if he brought back maps. He replied they are in Butte, and he will bring them to the next meeting.

Whitetail/Pipestone Update

Steve Hartmann discussed the closure order issued for the Whitetail/Pipestone area-

The BLM/FS issued a joint closure order as of June 26. The order restricts use off of roads or existing trails. We closed all of BLM, Forest Service closed about half.

The FS has an employee on an ATV continually educating people and finding out how people feel about

what we have done. Most people are positive. We received a call from an attorney representing MTA, he said they are getting a restraining order in District court. We haven't heard anymore about it.

Bob suggested that BLM/FS post roads that are open rather than the ones that are closed. Otherwise, the signs come down, and the offenders plead ignorance.

Forest Service said people seem to be complying with the order. David congratulated BLM, and said he was surprised FS came around.

Joint RAC Meeting Update

Spence discussed the joint RAC meeting, and the agenda was reviewed.

Meetings will be held at the Grantree for the first two days, and at the Holiday Inn on Thursday. BLM will assign each person a colored card that will determine which group they will take part in. Each group will have a leader and a scribe. Facilitators will also be available. The state management team (SMT) will participate. Pat Shea may attend. A tour of the Museum of the Rockies is planned. Thursday will be our individual meeting.

Spence said he visited with the committee about issues we discussed, everyone agreed that we don't want too much on the agenda, but we will talk about these issues and how they will be affected by ORV.

Spence asked for nominations for someone to speak for the RAC on the ORV issue at the joint meeting in Bozeman. Steve Antonoli was nominated and accepted.

Field Office Updates

Nancy Anderson:

S&G implementation- The Missoula Field Office has held two public meetings. About 8-10 people attended each meeting. They went well. The checklist was reviewed. An ID team met to decide how they want to tackle the schedule for about 80 allotments.

Blackfoot Exchange- The first phase is complete. They are getting ready to close the second phase. By fall, the exchange should be complete.

Bull trout- Missoula is the only BLM office in Montana effected by the listing of bull trout. The listing will have an adverse effect on RMPs; based mainly on grazing. Agencies have to be working within Interim guidance (INFISH). Any new projects that may effect bull trout, will go through a process that will take 135 days to come up with an opinion.

Steve Hartmann:

Personnel issues- They have an approval to hire a Rangeland Management Specialist. Also an approval for Public Affairs officer to be shared by all offices. This position will serve under Merle Good part of year. Position will be a liaison while legislature is in session.

Emergency closure- Sent preliminary EIS in the middle of June. BLM would still like RAC recommendation on an alternative. RAC will have 90 days after draft comes out this fall. Any comments on this would be appreciated.

** Spence and Jay Lynn did not receive a copy of EIS....Steve will see that they get a copy. Angie will follow-up with Jeanne on why they don't receive the RAC mailings.

South Elkhorns veg plan went out this week. Comments by August 7. If anyone wants a copy let Steve know.

Golden Sunlight ROD signed a couple of days ago. The document is about 60 pages, and will go out for public comment. Copies available.

S&G implementation- Will be working on 13 allotments over next 2 years. Six will be started this summer. Public meetings scheduled for July 29. A news release will be sent out. Plan to go over the checklist.

Comb-Wash judgement - An environmental group thinks BLM shouldn't reauthorize new grazing permits without going through the NEPA process. In the Comb-Wash case, the EIS that was done was not adequate. Riparian damage resulted. Now we have to do NEPA to authorize 10 year grazing permits. We have 88 expiring next year. Another workload we are not prepared for. A group is being put together to decide how to approach this. Scott will be on this group. This may dictate what allotments we do S&Gs on. We may end up working on low priority allotments rather than the high. May look at lumping allotments together and doing a programmatic EA.

Scott Powers:

The Dillon Field Office is currently involved in three assembled exchanges which are moving along. Three public meetings were held with moderate attendance and little objections. The number of acres we dispose of will be determined by the amount of NACA funds we receive. We have an 85% chance of getting it funded. They will also give maintenance money.

The Axolotl property to be acquired is unbelievable. Right now access is regulated by permits, people have to walk in. Open for management suggestions. It will not be opened to motorized vehicles.

S&Gs implementation- We have issued some decisions. We have completed a few projects out at Medicine Lodge (3 exclosures around some sensitive riparian areas).

Personnel- We lost our Recreation Planner- hired a temporary. Lost our Geologist- an employee from the state office is on a temporary detail, working on compliance inspections. Lost our GIS Tech which has shut us down. We did not get an approval to fill it.

Tomorrow is weed day. Expecting about 200 volunteers and 12 boats.

Projects: - Working on WCT mitigation projects-Armored water gaps on Craver creek and Rape creek;

- Working on an 100 hour road maintenance contract;

- Purchased easement on O'Dell creek which clears up access issues.

- Building bridge on Hell Roaring Creek in Centennials. Material will be flown in. Have been some arguments over how wide the bridge should be. It is in a primitive area.

- Giving Idaho FS \$10,000 to finish up a couple miles on the CDT trail.

- We replaced and outhouse at Ruby Reservoir and placed gravel on the road.
- Archaeology field school coming up at Tree Frog Springs, in the Centennial.
- Bannack Days next weekend.
- Mel talked about the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association (MOGA) pack trip. He stated this is the 6th year they have done this. the Idea is to get agency folks out of the office to talk over a campfire rather than a desk. He stated they all came away feeling good.

ORV Discussion

Renee asked how the RAC wanted to proceed to develop guidelines for ORV.

Cedron handed out (handout#5) some examples on recreation management developed by a subcommittee in Miles City.

After members voiced their opinions on what ORV guidelines would include, the RAC decided to address "Travel Management" which will include travel, public access and ORV. Renee asked if anyone disagreed with that decision, and the reply was "no".

When the RAC developed grazing Standards, they implied they should be for all uses and guidelines would be more specific. After looking at the ORV issue, the RAC realized not all standards have been addressed (i.e. forest standards). It was suggested that they develop standards for the "health of the land".

Spence remarked that everyone should keep in mind they are dealing with a specific issue. They will have to make a recommendation, which may come before the guides are formulated. He stated travel management is one step more inclusive than Miles City's recreation management. Steve Hartmann replied that Recreation management is more inclusive than travel management. It includes where campgrounds and trailheads will be, etc.

Cedron stated we should be aware of what is coming in the future. In the past 20 years we got blind sighted by technology. Our attitude is live and let live. We loathe to curtail use until it is bad. We don't want to say no to better things, but you can get hurt before you know it. Personal watercraft is a potential danger. It is not a good thing for society in general. Ultralight aircraft...we should think about it up front. He hopes that we try to think of processes that protect us from technology.

Bob Z. handed out a copy of the 43 CFR 8340 regulations. He commented that they need to first deal with categories and definitions. He read the definition of *trail* from Webster's dictionary. He said they also need to define vehicle routes vs. constructed routes.

Steve Hartmann said some of the issues BLM struggles with are vehicles crossing creeks, grade, and waterbars. Mel replied he would hope that BLM would do the leg work on that type of issue and put the alternative in front of the RAC. That is the only way we would ever come up with a solution.

Need to determine what is acceptable and what is not. We need a reference point, so we can say "this area is prohibiting it from meeting a standard, this riparian area is not functioning." What is adversely effecting it needs to be addressed.

Everyone was asked if they agreed to relabel Standards. They did not want to rewrite Standards for all uses....

Decision: An explanatory statement will be placed in the Preamble to Travel Management guidelines that ALL BLM lands are being addressed under the term Rangeland Health. The following issues were determined through brainstorming:

Issues that relate to Travel Management

weeds

historical use

enforcement

definitions

resources

non recreational use (salt, timber sales,)

funding

inventory/monitoring (where are they)

user conflicts

seasonal use/time restrictions/time of day

wildlife conflicts

type of use (mix of vehicular/non vehicular)

information/education

facilities

conflicts with grazing, logging, mining

special needs(handicapped,senior citizens)

route design

special exemptions

Inter-agency cooperation

periodical revising of travel plan (update frequency)

understandability of maps (educ/info)

adverse effects

consistency with current law

Access to public lands

future populations- trends

appropriate role for public lands

sacrifice zones--Intensive use area

solitude/ laws of solitude

community economies

impacts on local governments

maintenance/user fees

The following comments were made regarding the issues that were identified:

Cedron said some issues don't have anything to do with the standards, maybe we should go through them and show which standard they go with.

David commented he wouldn't be comfortable with tossing out any of the issues if they don't fit a standard. They decided they could either add to existing standards and reclassify them, or develop new standards.

A question was asked "Do guidelines always have to reference back to our Standards?" Some may reference back to a law (historical, cultural).

Spence asked about the *new*, "Are they going to have a new standard or incorporate it in the preamble?"

They decided when categorizing the issues, any that were listed as "other" will be dealt with in the Preamble or as administrative.

The following issues were grouped according to whether they 1) related to an existing Standard, 2) would need to be addressed by a new Standard, or 3) they would be addressed in the preamble or otherwise.

Issues: Related Standard/New/Other:

weeds 1, 2, 5

historical use/inventory/monitoring/trends in use New

enforcement New

definitions Other/Preamble

resources New

non recreational use (salt, timber sales,) Other/Preamble

funding Other/Preamble

inventory/monitoring (where are they) New

user conflicts/type of use New

seasonal use/time restrictions/time of day 1-5

wildlife conflicts 5

wildlife harassment New

information/education Other/Preamble

facilities/route design 1-5

conflicts with other uses (grazing, logging, mining) New

special needs & exemptions; and intensive use zones New

inter-agency cooperation Other/Preamble

periodical revising of travel plan (update frequency) Other/Preamble

understandability of maps (educ/info) Other/preamble

adverse effects 1-5, New

consistency with current law Other/Preamble

access to public lands New

future populations New

trends in use New

appropriate role for public lands (recreation needs) New

intensive use zones 1-5, New

solitude/ loss of solitude New

community economies Other/Preamble

impacts on local governments Other/Preamble

maintenance/user fees New

Issues that will be addressed in the "Preamble"

Non Recreational Use

Funding

Information/Education

Interagency Cooperation/Coordination

Update frequency of Maps

Understandability of Maps

Community Economies

Impacts on Local Governments

Consistency with Current Laws

Issues that need addressed in "Definitions"

Trails

Vehicle Route

Constructed Roads

Issues that are new and need a Standard or Guide

Historical Use/Inventory/Monitoring/Trends in Use

Special Needs and Exemptions, and Intensive Use Zones

Enforcement

Cultural Resources

User Conflicts/Conflicts with other uses/Loss of Solitude

Wildlife Harassment/User Ethics

Access to Public Land and thru Public Land to Private

Appropriate Niche of Public Lands in Providing Opportunities

Maintenance/User Fees

Issues that relate to a Standard

Weeds 1,2,5

Facilities/Route Design 1-5

Seasonal Use/Timing 1-5

Wildlife Conflicts 5

Adverse Effects 1-5

Intensive Use Zones 1-5

Public Comment Period

No Comments.

Handouts

1. SO Memorandum regarding RAC nominations
2. copy of Grant Godbolt's letter to the Editor
3. Davis Delsordo's resignation letter
4. Draft Agenda for the Joint RAC meeting
5. Orv issue work by Miles City RAC
6. BLM regulations 43 CFR Parts 8340 and 9268 A

Decisions to be Confirmed

1. Name of RAC is now Western Montana Resource Advisory Council
2. Web page can be started, e-mail address of RAC members not to be given out.
3. The RAC will address "Travel Management" by including access, orv, and travel.
4. An explanatory statement will be placed in the Preamble to Travel Management guidelines that ALL BLM lands are being addressed under the term Rangeland Health.

5. Steve Antonoli will speak for the RAC on ORV at the joint meeting in Bozeman.

Action Items

1. Steve will see that Spence and Jay Lynn receive a copy of the EIS
2. Angie will send out Internet addresses on news pages.
3. Steve will bring Piute maps to Bozeman meeting

Next agenda

1. Confirm new Name and Decisions
2. Field Office Updates
3. Comb-Wash Update
4. ID Standards vs. Guides on new issues
5. Work on Preamble
6. Start on Draft Standards and Guidelines for Travel Management

Butte Resource Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes of May 20, 1998

Butte, Montana

Absent: Bob Zimmerman, Dale Tash, Blake Huntley

Opening: Jim Owings is in Boise. The agenda was reviewed.

Spence spoke about the video conference. He visited with Babbitt and Shea before it started. The other members on the panel gave him some ideas that were personally helpful. He suggested that if anyone ever has the chance to visit the Training Center, to do so because it is a first class operation. He asked if copies of the broadcast were sent to the RAC members. Since they were not, he suggested they view the tape at one of the BLM offices.

Spence stated he sat in on a telephone conference about a joint RAC meeting. Dates have been set for September 15-17, in Billings. It will begin on Tuesday at Noon, a field trip is scheduled for Wednesday, and Thursday is set aside for the RACs to have individual meetings. Jody Weil of the State office is coordinating items for the agenda. Another telephone conference is scheduled on July 1. Spence asked if the BRAC had particular items they would like to see on the agenda. Suggested items include:

- * Adequate time for questions, rather than filling up the meeting with guest speakers.
- * Informal time to speak with other RAC members. Open time to talk to officials.
- * Small break out sessions that are organized by topic (S&Gs, Weeds, ORV) People can attend a certain session they are particularly interested in.
- * The idea is to see what other RACs are doing. Visualize this as finding out what other RACs have done on weeds, etc.
- * All topics should be presented, but an hour at the end so people could pick the issues they are interested in and have a more in depth discussion.
- * Break the three categories out, and meet with the other RAC members that represent your category. (or break them out as industry folks, environmental interests, etc.)
- * Have a presentation to the whole group, then split into focus groups of 15 each that is facilitated. Have them focused on one issue. Afterwards, bring your ideas back to the larger group.
- * There seems to be a similarity in issues that are coming up. I would like to see what other RACs are doing at their regular meetings. I would like to see their Minutes or a summarization like a newsletter.
- * Interested in all issues and don't want to miss any of them. If they break into groups, have them staggered, or we could be bystanders to listen to the information they are coming up with.

* If we talk in smaller groups, they tend to over schedule, and we don't have enough time to talk about everything. Number of subjects need to be limited.

ENCLOSURE 1

* Schedule a break out session in the evening.

* Get a small enough group to discuss issues. Don't want to sit in a room like a convention. Would like to get to know the other people and attitudes. Need groups mixed up.

* Have the experts give a general presentation, then be in the meeting as a mentor with each of the smaller groups.

The question was asked, "What is the objective of having an expert come in?" The reply was "it would be educational." Cedron stated we are beyond being educated about weeds. We don't need to be told that they are a problem. The group wants to know how to get the biggest bang for their buck, and where do they start? They want to know what they can do. What is happening with biological or chemical control? They want to hear strategies and research developments.

Other topics that were mentioned as possible issues were:

* Non-native species (plants and/or animals)

* T&E species and impacts

* Conservation easements

* Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) (sediment loading)

Spence asked what the group would like on the agenda for September 17th. Suggestions included:

* Recap of the first two days; decide where do we go from here? Do we make recommendations to Area Managers on what we learned?

Decision: Agenda for September 17 will be set on July 10th at RAC meeting in Dillon.

The discussion shifted to ORV when Steve Antonoli asked if the RAC was planning to take on the task of developing Standards and Guidelines for the ORV issue in general. Renee reminded the RAC they made a commitment at previous meetings to make a recommendation on an alternative specific to the Whitetail- Pipestone area.

Spence commented that the RAC agreed to attack it. He asked if the RAC would like to look at that area only, or look at S&Gs across the board. He also asked Merle what timeframe they were looking at for the Whitetail-Pipestone area. Merle replied that BLM would like the RAC to comment on a preferred alternative however, the BLM is doing an EIS rather than an EA so the timeframes have changed. It was suggested that the RAC discuss how they would continue working on the ORV issue at one of the stops during the field trip.

There was some discussion on the meaning of ORV and how it is defined. David felt that the RAC should look at developing guidelines for travel management on public lands. Jay Lynn wanted the group

to be able to apply the guides to local situations. Spence stated it wouldn't be too hard to develop them if they focused on the health of the land rather than users. Mel's feelings were that you can not protect 100% of the land, people need to have a form of travel. He stated they should look at having a reasonable route that doesn't bother artifacts or damage resources. He agreed that a majority of the land needs to be protected, but everyone needs to compromise.

The July 10th meeting will focus on developing guidelines for travel management on BLM lands.

Updates:

Merle stated six RAC terms are due to expire. BLM received 6 new nominations. Nominations closed May 7, and were sent to MSO yesterday. The Governor will receive them by June 12. After concurrence with the Governor, the new members will be appointed before the joint RAC meeting in September. Merle stated that Jim thought that both old and new members could attend that meeting.

A BLM employee survey was conducted and the Director is very concerned with the results they received. He is putting together groups to address some of the issues that employees addressed (management practices, awards and recognition, training, shortage of funds). Spence asked to see a copy of the results, so the RAC could give advice to the BLM on how to rectify some problems.

Merle handed out an option that Dave Mari put together on how to manage RACs under two-tier.

Merle stated Jim Owings is in Boise looking at a job working on the UCRB project. Merle will be detailed as a Field Office Manager for Headwaters. He explained that the Resource Areas will now be called Field Offices. The support staff will report to Billings, but will continue to service the 3 field offices.

The 3 Field Office Managers will report to the State Director, rather than the District Manager. Boundaries of areas will remain the same. He asked that the RAC put the word out that BLM is not closing the Butte office, just reorganizing.

Cedron requested a new contact sheet of BLM employees. Jeanne will mail those out once decisions on reorganization have been finalized. She will also make a list of RAC members E-mail addresses so they can communicate with each other. RAC members requested that the addresses not be given to the public.

Merle handed out a copy of Public Lands News. He also asked if the RAC was interested in having a web site. An example from the Southwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council was passed out. David commented that they could post meeting minutes along with dates and locations of meetings. No final decision was made.

There will be a telecast tomorrow on weeds. This is live and interactive. If you are near one of the offices and would like to see it, you are welcome.

Scott Powers provided an update on S&Gs. He stated the Core group working on Hansen Creek allotment made the calls for Standards on the allotment. They have identified issues and are working on a management plan to address them. Scott stated that he or Mark Goeden will go out on each allotment along with the permittee and range con to make the call, so there are no surprises.

Scott also gave an update on the assembled land exchange taking place in the Dillon Resource Area (Maiden rock, Axolotl Lakes and Beaverhead tract). The Notice of Intent has been published in local

newspapers identifying about 6,000 acres (which is twice as much as is needed) for potential disposal. Open houses are scheduled in Dillon 5/26; Ennis 5/27, and Butte 5/28.

Merle briefed the RAC on exchanges in the Butte area. They are trying to complete the Scratchgravel Hills acquisition as the land owner offered to sell if BLM took immediate action. The tract is being subdivided all around it, and the public would like to preserve the open space. BLM hopes to have it by July.

Other ongoing exchanges are the Devils Elbow and Golden Sunlight Mine.

Public Comment- No public.

Rich asked about an isolated tract in the Grady area. He wanted to know if BLM could still sell it if there is no interest. Merle said yes, but it may get dropped. He asked if tracts can be split, and stated that 40 acre parcel is high value. Merle stated that tracts can be split.

Steve Hartmann updated the RAC on S&G implementation in the Headwaters Resource Area. They held public meetings Boulder, Helena, Melrose, and Townsend. They all went well. He stated he appreciates that Dan and Doug attended in Townsend. Dan thought it went well, but it was hard to keep the public focused. He stated he is not sure that everyone there was aware of what is going to happen. He thinks BLM will get more calls when people realize a change is coming.

Steve Antonoli asked if they will retain their name as "Butte RAC". A suggestion was made that they be called the "Western Montana RAC". After two-tier implementation, the decision will be up to the RAC.

The RAC was in agreement that the Field Office managers should rotate as BLM contact/coordinators and they will report to all three managers.

Steve Hartmann briefed the RAC on the field trip to the Whitetail-Pipestone area. He requested that the RAC give a recommendation on an alternative. He explained that the process has elevated to an EIS rather than an EA and stated the Alternatives will go out by June 1st. They hope to have a Decision next spring.

They are also faced with the dilemma on what to do until a decision is made; leave it open or issue an emergency closure to off road use. The emergency closure would limit travel to existing roads and trails. Darrell McDaniel explained that they are very concerned about the resource damage to the cultural sites that are in the area. He explained, if it is left open, as it is now, they have no authority to prevent new trails from being created. If an emergency closure is issued, the Law Enforcement Ranger could issue a ticket, if he caught someone cutting a new trail. This is a very controversial issue and BLM would like the RAC to make a recommendation after/during the field tour in regard to an emergency closure or restriction.

Field Notes:

The RAC reconvened in the afternoon for a field tour to locations in the Whitetail-Pipestone area east of Butte. After reviewing two different locations, there was discussion about closure/restriction for safety reasons and to prevent resource damage from occurring. A vote was taken and consensus reached by the RAC to recommend that BLM institute a temporary restriction of the Whitetail-Pipestone area, limiting travel to existing roads and trails until the EIS is completed and a final decision can be reached. The discussion also acknowledged that BLM could consider closures of site specific roads/trails/areas where

resource values are being damaged, providing adequate justification can be given.

The question was then asked what action the Forest Service would take if the BLM followed through on the RAC's recommendation. Due to changing staffs (ie. many "actings" presently in the Forest System) and shortage of staff and dollars for enforcement, the Forest Service indicated that presently it is unlikely that they would follow through with the same action. This was of great concern to the RAC members who referred back to previous discussions of the need for the FS and BLM to work together on this issue. Mention was made of discussions with Mike Dombeck, Chief of the Forest Service and a letter from Debbie Austin, Beaverhead-Deerlodge Forest Supervisor (presently on leave) to the RAC that supported the notion of the BLM and Forest working together in this particular area and considering comments or recommendations from the RAC.

Action Items:

- 1) It was decided that Spence would prepare a letter on behalf of the RAC to Dick Owenby, current Acting Beaverhead-Deerlodge Forest Supervisor, and attach the minutes from this RAC meeting in an attempt to impress upon the Forest the importance of cooperation and consistency between the BLM and FS on this project and to reiterate the commitments previously received from certain levels of the hierarchy.
- 2) Merle Good will send copies of Montana's Employee Survey and the E-Mail address list to each member of the RAC before the next meeting.
- 3) Jeanne will send out an updated contact sheet of BLM employees, after the reorganization is final.

Handouts:

1. SMT Decision Document prepared by Dave Mari
2. Public Lands News
3. Southwest RAC web site example
4. Weed Management Course Outline

Next Meeting:

July 10th; Dillon at 9 a.m.

*Scott offered to take the RAC members on a tour of Medicine Lodge or on a river float if they would like to come a day early. Beaverhead County Weed Day is July 11, if members are interested in participating.

Butte District Resource Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes February 20, 1998.

Butte, Montana

RAC members absent: Jay Lynn Hansen, Bruce Farling, Rich Clough, Hank Goetz, Dale Tash, Spence Hegstad (at NTC for Satellite Broadcast).

BLM Personnel present: Jim Owings, Merle Good, Nancy Andersen, Steve Hartman, Mark Goeden, Renee Johnson-facilitator, Angie Morse- minutes.

Mark Goeden gave an update on implementing Standards and Guidelines in the Dillon Resource Area (DRA). The Draft S&G Communications plan from Jody Weil, MSO, was passed out. To date, DRA has held three public meetings (Dillon, Lima and Grant) at which a RAC member has been present to discuss implementation. Meetings are scheduled for Melrose and Sheridan. Mark stated that RAC members names were given out at these meetings, in case anyone receives a call. The latest version of the Butte District Standards checklist was handed out.

Jim Owings introduced guests from the Lewistown District; Dave Mari, Lewistown District Manager and Hugo Tureck, Chairman Lewistown RAC. Lewistown RAC is interested in what the Butte RAC is doing. Afternoon set aside for ORV. Pipestone, and ORV issues for future.

The Satellite teleconference was broadcast from 9:30-12:00.

Afternoon session

The RAC chose not to select a chairman for the day's meeting.

Two Tier Update: Effective April 1, 1998 BLM will implement Two-Tier organization. Jim said he has not heard how the RACs will report, most likely it will be to the Field office managers.

Jim handed out the letter Spence Hegstad received from Debbie Austin, Beaverhead-Deer Lodge Forest Supervisor. The letter stated regulations establishing the RAC do not allow the RAC to advise the FS. However, while dealing with the Whitetail/Pipestone travel management issue, she is committed to listening to whatever solutions the RAC comes up with, and will consider them along with other alternatives.

Public Comment Period: The RAC will allow the public to comment after the ORV alternative presentations.

Whitetail/Pipestone Presentation:

Steve Hartman provided a description of the project area. Darrell McDaniel handed out a map showing the project boundary. The project area is divided into five sub-units (Galena, Homestake, Whitetail, Pipestone, Toll Mountain). The goal for this area is to accommodate as much recreation use as can be allowed for the entire area, without causing resource damage. Because of no management plan in place,

weeds are being spread, cultural sites are being damaged, and many of the trails are becoming unsafe due to erosion.

Margie Ewing, Butte District Ranger, stated several public meetings and three field trips have been held to involve the public in open decision making. The goal was to find out who uses the area since everyone uses it differently. They sent out a general letter stating they wanted to mix recreation and resource management. The presentation today is basically what was presented at the public meetings. Alternatives were accepted from two user groups.

Mike Browne-BLM Physical Scientist, Dave Salo- USFS Hydrologist, Dave Rupert- USFS Soil Scientist, spoke about existing conditions that were found when the area evaluation was completed. Elements that were looked at were soil texture, depth, slopes, water holding compacity and other properties to determine the condition for different uses. The NRCS has three soil erosion classifications: Severe, Moderate and Slightly Erodable. A lot of the area was found to be very erodible and very steep. Dave Salo showed slides of area.

Sandi Morris, USFS Archeologist and Darrell Sanders, BLM Archeologist spoke about cultural resources that were found in the area. When the initial cultural inventory was done, they came up with an incredible number of significant sites. These sites vary in age and size, and include resources such as rock art, historic mining, earthen dams for agriculture use, buffalo kill sites, crystal collecting areas, and evidence of early log cutting for the railroad.

Sally Sovey, BLM Wildlife Biologist, and Betsy Fullman, FS Wildlife Biologist spoke about wildlife concerns such as elk winter range, security and calving areas. The goal is to increase security, or maintain what is currently available.

Jocelyn Dodge, FS Recreation Forester, (filling in for Jim Brammer) spoke of the Westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) concerns within the project area. Pure strains of WCT have been found along the Little Boulder river. Roads that parallel these streams are adding sediment and effecting the WCT habitat.

Rangelands were discussed by Eric Tolf, of the Jefferson Ranger District and Sheila McNee, BLM. Sheila stated there are approximately 30 allotments in the project area, within these there are 75 pastures. Currently, about 3,300 cow/calf pairs are running on these allotments. This area has about 225 sections of fence, with about 445 gates. There is a constant struggle with gates being left open and fences being cut. It has been suggested that 4-wheeler cattleguards be installed. The cost of this was estimated at \$112,000, and they are not that effective. Often when cows try to cross the cattleguard, they become stuck in them, causing destruction of the animal.

Sheila also discussed the perceived double standard on management of public lands. Ranchers are required to move the cattle when utilization standards have been met to improve streambanks but they feel the same standards are not required of other public land users such as off road vehicles.

Weeds are the second largest concern.

Jocelyn Dodge explained the agencies have looked at a variety of recreation needs and facilities for the project area. An alternative overview was handed out.

Jim Kuipers, representing the Southwest Montana Wildlands Alliance, presented the Conservationists' Alternative. An overview of this was also handed out.

Earl Williams, representing the Montana Trails Association (MTA), stated they would like to see this project developed into the recreation capital of the world. MTA's proposal would include full development of facilities including lodging, gas and shopping opportunities for recreationists. This development would be an economic benefit for the community by bringing people in. Funding opportunities will follow. He stated MTA does not encourage resource damage. They have installed six cattleguards, ten bridges, and through Project Catchup, spent \$36,000 last year. They are in favor of lighthanded management.

Public Comment Period:

Cory Fitzgerald, Whitehall: A permittee that feels roads are impacting his property by spreading weeds, and displacing elk. He stated if we don't get some control we will look like western Montana (Missoula). He hopes his children will be next generation on his ranch. He sees it as making money or playing like the recreationists. He feels we need road closures, stated the only reason some of these roads end, is because they end on his private land. We need some control. He has been coming to these meetings for two years, and wants a decision. He stated he has had to cut his cows out of the cattleguards.

Norm Teby, Whitehall: A permittee in Homestake area for 51 years. Would like management to consist of a set number of user days and user fees. As for resource impacts, the soils are very sensitive. Toll Mountain has roads going through a livestock crossing and elk calving area, feels this is not acceptable. Making this area the recreational capital is absurd, just to make a dollar.

Doug Abelin, Helena: Provided a handout, and is lobbying for motorized recreation, with a managed use philosophy. He has ideas on how to do it. His organization has been given grants for weeds and trails that total \$135,000. They have put a portion of Simms money into grants and have volunteered numerous hours in labor.

Will Carey, Butte: During the Summer of 1996 they got together with the Forest Service to help build bridges across a small creek. In 1997 they went back to do two more bridges, and found that motorcycles and four-wheelers had driven around the new bridges to cross the creek. They need a big education.

END PUBLIC COMMENT.

RAC questions and answers---

David- What is the impact on historic mining activities and where people are traveling, as the agencies are reclaiming is it helping to control damage?

Don't know about Pipestone area, we have smaller claims and adits, nothing attracting motorized use. It is in other places.

Bob- would like overlays to tell where impacts are proposed, wildlife, natural areas-roadless areas should be displayed on maps.

EA should be coming out, will be a detailed analysis of each alternative, should be maps along with that to show impacts.

Mel- To Wildlands Alliance- Would you foresee a decrease in AUMs or increase?

Maintain a status quo, no problem with grazing.

Steve A.- What percent of motorized, can you control weeds on? Darrell M- We received \$35,000 for weed control last year and we spent almost all of it. Eric will submit a grant this year to help control weeds. It will go towards a spray unit and operator to work 40 hours per week.

Eric Tolf- The OHVs pick up the weed seed and they are spread. They may grow for years before they are discovered. We are currently spending \$40-50,000 per year on weeds just to maintain what we know about. We are always faced with new weeds that are more difficult to control.

Doug- How many areas are over the FS standard for road density? Jocelyn- 9 areas that are over Forest plan density.

Does it fall under Dombecks plan?

Margie- Yes. A big chunk falls under the 18 month ban on development in roadless areas. The ban applies to newly constructed roads and possibly maintenance. We could not implement anything until the 18 months are up. The definition is a little vague.

Dan- With regard to timber management, where would the money come from to maintain roads that already exist?

We have no proposals for timber harvest so there is no money available. Maintenance would come out of road maintenance dollars. That money fluctuates. Trails come under trail maintenance which are separate dollars, which is really small. New construction- recreation comes out of capital investment dollars. Over the last 5 years, we have received very little money for recreation construction. It is mostly used to upgrade campgrounds.

Jocelyn stated because of a large backlog of trails, they don't have enough money. The FS can not maintain everything that exists, this is why there is no money for new construction. There are new pots of money for watershed protection.

Mike Browne said with as many trails as we have in this area, it may fall into Vice President Gore's Clean Water Initiative for Nonpoint Pollution Sources.

Do you see unacceptable damage occurring now?

We currently have erosion, sediment, riparian area damage, and noxious weeds. We think we can mitigate the unacceptable damage and still provide recreational opportunities.

Cedron- I see your definition of mitigate is to rationalize.

Steve H- No, I mean to lessen or eliminate the problem.

Cedron- If unacceptable damage is occurring you need to restore it, not mitigate it.

Margie- There are four ways to mitigate: removing trails, waterbars, regrading surface, completely rehab or reconstruct. Each site is different, need to do what is appropriate for that site.

Cedron- What is the recreational opportunity? Earls proposal is to drive across the landscape, off the

roads. We all like to leave our tracks. It is okay when it is snow; but it doesn't cut it when you are talking about the ground.

David- When the RAC devised S&Gs for grazing, standards were to apply to all uses as a whole.

Margie- We still have to meet properly functioning in a riparian area, no matter what use is out there.

Mark G- We need to ask, "Are we meeting the standard?" and "Are livestock contributing to the factor?". If the answer is no, we still have to address the problem.

Jim O- We are dealing with this specific area. The RAC may want to look at developing guidelines for other areas. This might be a natural progression.

Bob- We need to know specifically where these areas are and what would need to take place to satisfy the ranchers, stakeholders, etc.

That is coming in the EA.

Cedron- What are some options for protecting cultural resources?

Sandi- If there is a prehistoric site, we can reroute the trail, build a pad over the site, put up a barrier, or restrict access to the area.

Cedron- What are the mileages on system vs. non system roads? Our definition of system if the road is numbered and people can identify it. There is a total of 930 miles, but we don't have the split total available today. Would guess it is half/half.

Dave Mari- Our intentions of coming here is to see what we could do on an inter-RAC basis, or statewide basis? We should consider that off road vehicles is something we want to focus on.

Hugo- This is similar to the discussion the Lewistown RAC had. The area you are facing is much more important than what we have been faced with.

Mel- Every time we face ORV, it seems like other recreational uses impact it. Is it too broad to look at all recreational uses? How big of a chunk do you want to bite off?

Steve A.- If we can come to consensus on this, I think we should just limit it to off road vehicle use.

David- When we meet with the other RACs we should keep the agenda fairly open. Hear what other RACs have dealt with and share ideas. We won't get 45 people together and decide on something, but we can share ideas.

Cedron- I can see a potential benefit. I don't want the RAC to get into an allocation issue. The bottom line is that the agencies can and do define sideboards.

Cedron- At the joint meeting, I would like more education on the resources. What can they take? Cedron used an example of leafy spurge. You can kill the top part of the plant, but there is still 40 feet of roots underground that is not effected.

Hugo- All councils have arrived at looking at ORV as an issue. It is something we find important.

Steve Slagle (public representing 4-wheel Drive Assn)- You make it sound like all off road users are renegades and abuse the resources. There are many people out there that are sensitive. It is a problem that is reflecting on us. We don't feel we are responsible, we are losing our habitat because of it. If this RAC gets into off highway vehicle stuff you should have someone in the room as a member or a guest to provide input on the good things we have done.

Cedron- The problem with ORV use, we have been filling up the country with practices that have been acceptable for ages. Now we are finding it is causing damage, because of the numbers of people participating in these activities. There are so many roads now, it makes a difference. It would take an incredible amount of input, money and resources, to sustain the kind of development that was proposed by MTA.

Steve Slagle- We don't advocate the off trail thing, but we don't think absolute closure will do it. You need to educate people, make them stay on trails. We need to compromise.

Steve Hartman- We have all invested a lot in this. I heard before that the RAC would make a recommendation on the alternatives. Is the RAC still committed to this, and do they want to be on the mailing list for the public meetings?

Members responded positively to both questions.

Action Items:

* David requested BLM get each RAC member's E-mail address and forward them to the RAC.

Handouts:

1. Draft Communication Plan for Implementation of Standards and Guidelines
2. DRA S&G Checklist
3. Public Lands News
4. Washington Office Information Bulletin 98-70
5. Letter to Spence Hegstad from Debbie Austin
6. Letter to Stanley F. Meyer from Lewistown RAC
7. Project Boundary Map
8. Whitetail Pipestone Alternatives Overview
9. Conservationists' Alternative

Next meeting:

* May 20th. Possible field trip to Tailpipe.